

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Extension Service
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TO ALL STATE DIRECTORS OF EXTENSION:

SUBJECT: Current Farm Labor News - #22

E. C. McInnis, Assistant South-Central Area Director, had a heart attack late in July. As his doctor recommends an extended vacation, his leadership in the Little Rock office and the South-Central area will be missed. H. H. Williamson, Assistant Director, will continue to give general supervision to the Farm Labor Program in the area. Through the courtesy of Director Aubrey Gates, Walter Cooper has become a cooperative employee of the Federal and Arkansas Extension Services. He will divide his time between work in the area office at Little Rock and work as State Farm Labor Supervisor in Arkansas. Zack Walsh will continue to devote half time to 'area' work and half time to duties as Assistant State Farm Labor Supervisor in Arkansas.

Procedure for Liquidation of Surplus Property acquired with Sec. 2 farm labor funds is covered by a revision of EFL Circular 29 issued Aug. 6. It recognizes the grant-in-aid character of these funds and delegates responsibility for disposal to the States.

In This Mail. With this letter you are receiving three pieces of farm labor material:

(1) August issue of Farm Journal containing "Here Come the Combines" (page 20), a Great Plains wheat harvest story written by Carroll P. Streeter, managing editor of the magazine, and a native of the grain belt. He developed the material during a visit to harvest fields, and through cooperation of South and North Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, and Texas State farm labor staffs; Ed Leker, North-Central Area Director; and this office. Coverage for Extension's harvest program through this story is tremendous because, in addition to Farm Journal's more than 2,650,000 circulation, the story was reprinted in full in the August issue of Reader's Digest.

(2) Copy of Spanish edition of the western migratory labor guide - "Trabajos de Agricultura a lo largo de las Carreteras Occidentales" (Farm Jobs Along Western Highways). It was developed by Robert G. Fowler, Assistant Western Area Director at Berkeley, Calif., in cooperation with the Arizona and Texas State farm labor supervisors.

(3) Copy of "Farm and Nonfarm Wage Income of the Hired Farm Working Force in 1946", a publication of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U.S.D.A.

Guides Do Their Job. Reports from the Midwest and Far West indicate that Extension's Farm Labor Guides, developed this year as a means of helping get maximum utilization of migratory and other domestic labor, are fulfilling every expectation in directing men and machines to areas of need. The edition of the Great Plains Combine and Labor Guide for the grain harvest, calculated to be big enough to last two years, is about exhausted. In the Far West, copies of the western guide - Jobs Along Western Highways - are going like hot cakes on a frosty morn, and Bob Fowler indicates that the complete supply (125,000) will be used this year.

The central guide - Farm Jobs from Gulf to Great Lakes - also is getting wide usage. Likewise supplemental guides developed in several States are very popular among farm workers. Texas' third edition of its reception center guide for intrastate workers, and its special maps for Texas interstate workers are much in demand. South Dakota developed a special grain harvest map to guide men and machines from Nebraska and Colorado, when ordinary routes of travel were cut off by storm damage. California has obtained wide usage of a clever 3-fold and 2-color "Looking for Farm Work?" folder which includes a harvest map and information station and Farm Labor office locations.

Ready for Grain Harvest Homestretch. Extension's Farm Labor grain harvest program is closing in on North Dakota and Montana, the last strongholds, after a sweep which started in Texas in early June instead of the customary mid-May - about two weeks late. Nebraska goes over the hump this week, and South Dakota is well on the way. North Dakota and Montana will come in late this week, with indications that North Dakota will be harvesting all over the State at the same time. This is one of the unique results of the wet spring which upset all planting and growing schedules. Fact is, Herbison says North Dakota may be harvesting along the Canadian border before it harvests along the South Dakota line.

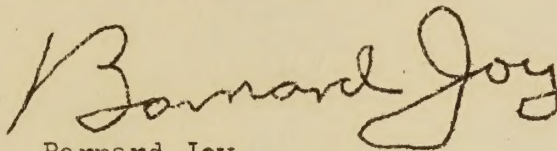
Even with the use of a larger number of custom combines - 1500 more than last year - there was a shortage of combines in Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas, when wheat was just right for cutting, because the peaks in all three States piled up at about the same time, and also because the acreage was much larger, than last year and the yield per acre and the straw were so much heavier than usual that there was a slowing down in what could be handled in a day. After that, demand slackened considerably since Nebraska, next to harvest, had a much smaller acreage than Kansas, Oklahoma or Texas. For a time it was feared that embarrassing combine surpluses might pile up in Nebraska, and there was concern over prospective idleness for some American owned machines and some of the 1100 combines invited in from Canada when there were not enough American owned machines of all types to meet the harvest crises in Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas. However skillful handling by State Supervisor Snipes and other Nebraska state Farm Labor people at McCook and other Nebraska ports of entry kept the steady flow moving and no serious difficulties developed. The eastern two-thirds of Nebraska was supplied through McCook and points east, with the surplus there being moved directly into eastern South Dakota, harvesting about the same time. Some straight combines went west from McCook, but most of those for the western counties, particularly in the Nebraska panhandle, entered the State through Sidney and other western ports of entry and from Colorado. The greater number of them moved non-stop from Oklahoma and Texas where the harvest was completed so late that they did not get an opportunity to work in Kansas. Flow of combines into the Nebraska panhandle started before most of the grain was ready for cutting, but no piling up of combines developed because county agents and other Farm Labor people at Grant, Ogallala, Chappell, Sidney, Kimball, Bridgeport and Alliance met the situation by holding only the machines they could immediately use and moving the surplus north to South Dakota.

Throughout the harvest in Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas and Nebraska there was a continuous and general surplus of labor and trucks, so much so that need for either was never discussed except in remote and scattered local areas. As a result many workers who wanted harvest jobs - particularly eastern Oklahoma people - were unable to get them. Maximum needs for outside labor will come in North Dakota with jobs for 25 to 30 thousand at peak periods. It is indicated that they will be available in close-by States. The number of available combines now appears to be sufficient. If not, Herbison has a reserve to draw on. Many

combines moving north through Nebraska into the Dakotas carried 'for sale' signs and among them a large number were in the hands of dealers, ports of entry records show. Newspapers are carrying many 'combines for sale' ads. Another interesting notation at ports of entry is the great increase in the number of combiners who carry housing and feeding equipment - mostly trailers - for their crews. Something puzzling cropped up at the Nebraska-Kansas line when officers enforcing the weed law and demanding clean combines found Kansas people objecting to the dumping of machines on Kansas soil, while Nebraska folks objected to dumping on Nebraska soil. Combiners grinned and moved on.

From Texas to the Canadian border the harvest has brought record acreages and record production per acre, and what generally is a record price for wheat. A Texas county agent put it this way: "This is the first crop we ever had that paid for the land in one season." Even so, many Kansas and Nebraska farmers "took a licking" when rains and hail and wind destroyed or heavily damaged prime crops ready for harvest. In Cheyenne, Nebraska's top producing wheat county, 35,000 acres were lost through one hail storm, and in Box Butte County, Nebraska, hail losses ran around 20,000 acres. Farmers in southwestern Kansas counties lost heavily through rain and wind which flattened fields all ready for cutting.

Sincerely yours,



Barnard Joy
Acting Deputy Director of Extension
Farm Labor Program

Enclosures-3

(Copy to State Farm Labor Supervisors)

